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ABSTRACT

This guide presents a series of check lists to help teachers and counselors provide nonbiased assessment for referred children, particularly those who are culturally different. The first section deals with evaluating the legitimacy of the referral and considers whether parents have been properly notified. The second section, meeting the child, considers the cultural values of the child or the evaluator which may influence the outcome of the assessment. The next sections deal with selection of an appropriate assessment approach, test administration, and scoring and interpretation. Consultation with team members and the assessment report are also covered. The final two sections evaluate the appropriateness of the individual education plan and outline follow-up responsibilities. The format of the guide consists of questions in each section with space provided to check a yes/no response, and a space for general comments. Several pages at the end of the guide are provided for summaries of the evaluation, by section. (JAC)

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GUIDE FOR NONBIASED ASSESSMENT

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This Guide may be used as a resource throughout the assessment process of any referred child but is considered critical for the assessment of the culturally different child.

CG 017645

This Guide may be duplicated.

If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.

Carl Gustav Jung
The Integration of the Personality (p. 285)

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SECTION A: REFERRAL

Yes	No		
___	___	A1	Are the parents/guardians aware that a referral has been made for their child, and by whom?
___	___	A2	Is this child's presenting problem clearly and precisely stated on the referral?
___	___		a) Does the referral include descriptive samples of behavior rather than opinions of the referring agent?
___	___		b) Is there supportive documentation of the problem?
___	___	A3	Is the referral legitimate?
___	___		a) Does the referring agent have a history of over referral of children from certain cultural groups?
___	___		b) Could irrelevant personal characteristics (e.g., sex or attractiveness) of the child have influenced the decision to refer him or her?
___	___		c) Could the referring agent have misinterpreted this child's actions or expression due to his or her lack of understanding of cultural differences between the agent and the child?
___	___	A4	Can the assessment team provide the referring agent with interim recommendations that may eliminate the need for a comprehensive evaluation?
___	___		a) Is it possible that the curriculum being used assumes that this child has developed readiness skills at home that in reality she or he hasn't had the opportunity to develop? If so, can the team assist the teacher in planning a program to give this child the opportunity to develop readiness skills?
___	___		b) Can the team provide information on the child's cultural background for the referring agent so that there are fewer misunderstandings between the referring agent and this child and perhaps other children of similar cultural background?

___ ___ A5 Have I informed this child's parents/guardians in their primary language of the referral?

___ ___ a) Have I explained the reason(s) for the referral?

___ ___ b) Have I discussed with the parents what next step activities may be involved?

e.g. - professional evaluations
- use of collected data
- design of an individualized education plan, if necessary

___ ___ c) Have I discussed due process procedures with the parents?

___ ___ d) Do I have documented parental permission for the evaluation?

___ ___ e) Have I asked the parents to actively participate in all phases of the assessment process?

___ ___ f) Have I informed the parents of their right to examine all relevant records in regard to the identification, evaluation and educational plan of their child?

SECTION A: GENERAL COMMENTS

SECTION B: MEETING THE CHILD

Yes	No		
		B1	What special conditions about this child do I need to consider?
___	___		a) What is the child's primary home language?
___	___		b) Do I know about the child's home environment factors? e.g. - familial relationships/placement - social and cultural customs
___	___		c) Do I understand this child's culture and language so that I can evoke a level of performance which accurately indicates the child's underlying competencies?
___	___		d) Is this child impeded by a handicap other than the referral problem that may result in the student's not understanding what I am talking about?
___	___	B2	What special conditions about myself do I need to consider?
___	___		a) How do I feel about this child?
___	___		b) Are *my* values different from this child's?
___	___		c) Will my attitude unfairly affect this child's performance?
___	___		d) Can I evaluate this child fairly and without prejudice?
___	___		e) If not, would I refer him or her to another assessor if one is available?
___	___	B3	Have I examined closely all the available existing information and sought additional information concerning this child?
___	___		a) Has the child's academic performance been consistent from year to year?
___	___		b) Is there evidence in this child's record that his or her performance was negatively or positively affected by classroom placement or teacher?
___	___		c) Are past test scores consistent with his or her past class performance?

___ ___ d) Am I familiar with past test instruments used to evaluate this child and how well can I rely on prior test scores?

___ ___ e) Have I observed this child in as many environments as possible (individual, large group, small group, play, home)?

___ ___ f) Am I making illegitimate assumptions about this child? e.g. Do I assume the youngster speaks and reads Spanish simply because the child is Puerto Rican?

___ ___ g) Have I actively sought additional information on non-school related variables that may have affected this child's school performance?

e.g. - health factors (adequate sleep, food)
- family difficulties
- peer group pressures

___ ___ B4 Does this child understand why he or she is in the assessment situation?

___ ___ a) Have I tried to explain at the learner's level of understanding what the reasons were for the referral?

___ ___ b) Have I given this child the opportunity to freely express her or his perceptions of "the problem"?

___ ___ c) Have I discussed with the child what next step activities may be involved?

SECTION B: GENERAL COMMENTS

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SECTION C: SELECTION OF APPROACH FOR ASSESSMENT

Yes	No		
___	___	C1	Have I considered what the best assessment approach is for this child?
___	___		a) Considering the reasons for referral, do I need to utilize behavioral observations, interviews, informal techniques or standardized techniques or a combinstion of the above?
___	___		b) Have I given as much thought to assessing this child's adaptive behavior as I have to the child's academic school performance?
___	___		c) Are the approaches I am considering consistent with the child's receptive and expressive abilities?
___	___		d) Am I placing an overdependence on one technique and overlooking others that may be more appropriate?
___	___		e) Have I achieved a balance between formal and informal techniques in my selection?
___	___	C2	If I have selected to use standardized instruments, have I considered all of the ramifications?
___	___		a) Am I testing this child simply because I've always used tests in my assessment procedure?
___	___		b) Am I administering a particular test simply because it is part of *THE BATTERY?*
___	___		c) Am I administering a test because I have been directed to do so by the Administration?
___	___		d) Does the instrument I've chosen include persons in the standardization sample from this child's cultural group?
___	___		e) Are subgroup scores reported in the manual?
___	___		f) Were there large enough numbers of this child's cultural group in the test sample for me to have any reliance on the norms?
___	___		g) Does the instrument I have selected assume a universal set of experiences for all children?

___ ___ h) Does the instrument selected contain illustrations that are misleading and/or outdated?

___ ___ i) Does the instrument selected employ vocabulary that is colloquial, regional and/or archaic?

___ ___ j) Do I understand the theoretical basis of the instrument?

___ ___ k) Will this instrument easily assist in delineating a recommended course of action to benefit this child?

___ ___ l) Have I reviewed current literature regarding this instrument?

___ ___ m) Have I reviewed current research related to potential cultural influences on test results?

SECTION C: GENERAL COMMENTS

SECTION D: TEST ADMINISTRATION

Yes	No		
___	___	D1	Are there factors (attitude, physical conditions) which support the need to reschedule this child for evaluation at another time?
___	___	D2	Could the physical environment of the test setting adversely affect this child's performance? For example, - room temperature - noise - inadequate space - poor lighting - furnishing inappropriate for child's size
___	___	D3	Am I familiar with the test manual and have I followed its directions?
___	___	D4	Have I given this child clear directions?
___	___		a) If his or her native language is not English, have I instructed the child in the student's first language?
___	___		b) Am I sure that this child understands my directions?
___	___	D5	Have I accurately recorded entire responses to test items, even though the child's answers may be incorrect, so that I might later consider them when interpreting his or her test scores?
___	___	D6	Did I establish and maintain rapport with this child throughout the evaluation session?

SECTION D: GENERAL COMMENTS

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SECTION E: SCORING AND INTERPRETATION

Yes	No		
___	___	E1	Have I examined each item missed by this child rather than merely looking at the youngster's total score?
___	___		a) Is there a pattern to the types of items this child missed?
___	___		b) Are the items missed free of cultural bias?
___	___		c) If I omitted all items missed that are culturally biased, would this child have performed significantly better?
___	___	E2	Am I aware that I must consider other factors in the interpretation of this child's scores?
___	___		a) Have I considered the effect the child's attitude and/or physical condition may have had on her or his performance?
___	___		b) Have I considered the effect that the child's lack of rapport with me may have had on demonstrated performance?
___	___		c) Does my interpretation of this child's performance include observations?
___	___		d) Do I realize that I should report and interpret scores within a range rather than as a number?
___	___	E3	What confidence do I have in this child's test scores?
___	___		a) Are test scores the most important aspect of this child's evaluation?
___	___		b) Will I allow test scores to outweigh my professional judgment about this child?

SECTION E: GENERAL COMMENTS

_____ _____

_____

SECTION F: CONSULTATION WITH TEAM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

Yes	No		
___	___	F1	Am I working as an integral member of a multidisciplinary team on behalf of this child?
___	___		a) Have I met with the team to share my findings regarding this child?
___	___		b) Are other team member's evaluation results in conflict with mine?
___	___		c) Can I admit my discipline's limitations and seek assistance from other team members?
___	___		d) Do I willingly share my competencies and knowledge with other team members for the benefit of this child?
___	___		e) Has the team arrived at its conclusions as a result of team consensus or was our decision influenced by the personality and/or power of an individual team member?
___	___	F2	Is the multidisciplinary team aware of its limitations?
___	___		a) Are we aware of community resource personnel and agencies that might assist us in developing an educational plan for this child? Do we utilize such resources before, during, and after the evaluation?
___	___		b) Do we on the team feel comfortable in including this child's parents in our discussions?

SECTION F: GENERAL COMMENTS

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SECTION G: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Yes	No		
___	___	G1	Is my report clearly written and free of jargon so that it can be easily understood by this child, the child's parents, and teachers?
___	___	G2	Does my report answer the questions asked in the referral?
___	___	G3	Are the recommendations I have made realistic and practical for the child, school, teacher and parents?
___	___	G4	Have I provided alternative recommendations?
___	___	G5	Have I included in my report a description of any problems that I encountered and the effects of such during the assessment process?

SECTION G: GENERAL COMMENTS

SECTION H: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Yes	No		
___	___	H1	Are we making this child fit into an established program or are we developing an individualized educational plan appropriate for this child?
___	___		a) Have we identified this child's strengths and weaknesses?
___	___		b) Have we specified long range goals and immediate objectives for this child?
___	___		c) Are we willing to assist the teacher in implementing this child's educational plan?
___	___		d) Have we stated when and how this child's progress will be evaluated and by whom?

SECTION H: GENERAL COMMENTS

SECTION I: FOLLOW UP

Yes	No		
___	___	11	What are my responsibilities after we have written this child's educational plan?
___	___		a) Have I discussed my findings and recommendations with this child's parents and explained their due process rights? Have I given the parents a written copy of this child's educational plan?
___	___		b) Have I met with those working with this child to discuss the educational plan and to assist them in implementing its recommendations?
___	___		c) Have I discussed my findings and recommendations with this child at the youngster's level of understanding?
___	___		d) Can I help those working directly with the child to become more familiar with this child's social and cultural background?
___	___		e) Have I sought this child's parents' permission for release of any confidential materials to other agencies and professionals?
___	___		f) Will I periodically review this child's educational plan in regard to his or her actual progress so that any necessary changes can be made?

SECTION I: GENERAL COMMENTS

SECTION J: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

I Section A: Referral

II Section B: Meeting the Child

III Section C: Selection of Approach for Assessment

IV Section D: Test Administration

V Section E: Scoring and Interpretation

VI Section F: Consultation with Team Members and Others

VII Section G: Assessment Report

VIII Section H: Individual Education Plan

IX Section I: Follow Up